

The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

VOLUME X

CHICAGO, SEPTEMBER, 1939

NUMBER 9

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The Mission of Change

BY FRANK FITT

Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. Psalm 55:19.

THAT is a rather striking statement—"Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." Is it true? And if it be true, then its converse must also be true: "Because they have had changes, therefore they fear God." Such a saying suggests quite a number of things to us. We belong to a generation which has known many changes. Does it follow, then, that ours is a generation which has an unusual chance to enter into an appreciation of the spiritual side of life? Yes, I think it does. That is the theme of this sermon—the mission of change for our spiritual blessing. There is a bright side as well as a dark side to the crises of these years. But let me get back to the psalmist and his saying.

The man who gave us this penetrating thought on the relationship between the experience of change and one's faith in God had not had a sheltered life. Quite the opposite, in fact. He had been exposed to much that had been difficult to endure. He gives us glimpses of his hardship in the phrases of his psalm. He had known the oppression of the wicked. He had been deceived by a treacherous friend. There were times when the most craven elements of his being asserted themselves. "My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me." There is a man who is afraid! "And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest!" There is a man who wants to run away from life! That is a very honest revelation, even if it be not a very flattering one. The psalmist had been tossed up and tossed down in his experience, and he mentions some of the times when he had been tossed

down. But he had come to certain constructive conclusions regarding his vicissitudes. He decided that the changes and buffetings of his experience had enlarged his faith and deepened his hold upon God. In fact, he felt the advantage of his own varied course to such an extent that he wondered if faith was possible without it. He concluded that it was not. "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God."

Of course the psalmist was right. The smooth times are always the smug times from the spiritual point of view. When the currents of a civilization are flowing easily, undisturbed by any rapids and whirlpools, the tendency is for people to lose the deeper convictions and the sterner disciplines. When things are going well in a material sense they are not likely to be going well in a spiritual sense. We can see that in an individual or in a family or in a state. A man or a family or a country win the rich and tremendous qualities of life—faith and liberty and a high sense of honor—out of struggle and hardship. Then they, or more likely their successors, begin to take things easily, to assume that their peace and content and security will last forever. That is the smooth time that is also the smug time. Inevitably it is preparing the way for its own downfall or its own revitalization. Perhaps it is preparing for both—its revitalization through its downfall. At any rate the psalmist was right. A man or a family or a nation needs doses of change and of challenge, shocks and disturbances and unpleasant realities at times, if spiritual vision is to remain keen.

WE WANT THE SMOOTH TIMES

Now the curious thing is that, although we know the lessons which warn us about the dangers of the smooth time, it is the smooth time we all want. We do not like the storm and the struggle; we like the sunshine with its ease and warmth. We do not like the dark valley of the shadow; we like the green pastures and the still waters. It seems to be the natural instinct of the human heart to seek for a center of rest, to join the psalmist in his desire to escape "from the windy storm and tempest." Probably all men and women look forward to achieving a period when they can have peace and security and freedom from harassing care and responsibility. That is a common desire, a universal hope. Not even the man who proclaims himself a revolutionary is an exception. Why does the revolutionary want to upset the social scheme and achieve vast changes in our order? So that mankind will have a stabilized and peaceful and eternal prosperity. Of course the revolutionary is generally thinking in material terms. I am not sure that his good would bless us spiritually. The psalmist would not have agreed with him. Nor did Studdert-Kennedy agree in his poem called "A Paradise" in which he makes a bitter thrust of scorn against the mood that seeks ease.

I would buy me a perfect island home,
Sweet set in a southern sea,
And then I would build me a paradise
For the heart of my love and me.

I would plant me a perfect garden there,
The one that my dream-soul knows,
And the years would flow as the petals grow
That flame to a perfect rose.

I would build me a perfect temple there,
A shrine where my Christ might dwell. . . .
And then you would wake to behold your soul
Damned deep in a perfect hell.

The truth of the matter is that not one of us—no individual, no family, no nation—can ever find security of tenure. That has been true all through the past and will probably remain true all through the future. Any moment any of us may be struck down by a sorrow, be maimed of soul, as many a person has been struck down at some corner by an automobile and maimed of body. There is no lasting equilibrium in life, not even in our faith, for as life goes on our faith should broaden and deepen as it confronts new situations.

Karl Wilhelm Humboldt was a great German philologist who died over a hundred years ago. He was a devout man and in a letter to a friend he made this rather remarkable statement: "The things of the world are ever rising and falling, and in perpetual change; and this change must be according to the will of God, as he has bestowed upon man neither the wisdom nor the power to enable him to check it. The great lesson in these things is, that man must strengthen himself doubly at such times to fulfill his duty, and to do what is right, and must seek his happiness and inward peace from objects which cannot be taken away from him." Change is inevitable, and the real contrast is not between a time of complete stability and a time of movement, for there can never be complete stability. The real contrast is found in the degree in which change comes, whether it is gradual or sudden.

OUR TIMES LEAD TO GOD

The psalmist's saying about change and the fear of God provokes thought about these times in which we live. Certainly these times are different from the times that our fathers knew. Recently Winston Churchill wrote a book called *Great Contemporaries*, a series of essays containing some studies of the leading men of Victorian England whom he had known. He says of them, "They never had to face, as we have done, and still do, the possibility of national ruin. . . . World revolution, mortal defeat, national subjugation, chaotic degeneration, or even national bankruptcy, had not laid steel claws upon their sedate, serene, complacent life." There he states the contrast between the generation that they had known and the generation that he had known. It was not that the former generation did not have its problems and changes and difficulties. It is, rather, that the problems and changes and difficulties of our time are greater.

In a recent issue of the *Reader's Digest* there is a quotation from Alexander Woollcott which shows how different the world was only twenty-five years ago. In 1912 Woollcott had never heard of jazz or a gossip column or soviets. He thought of a job as something any man willing to work could get. War was merely

something which lingered on as a survival in remote, comic opera countries in Central America and the Balkans. What a different condition Alexander Woollcott and all the rest of us face in 1939! Does this change affect our faith? Of course it does.

Perhaps I can clarify this by asking whether the events of the last quarter-century or so have helped us to come to certain conclusions about government. Surely the answer must be in the affirmative. Twenty-five years ago there was no Soviet Russia, no fascist Italy, no nazi Germany. It is quite inconceivable that such types of government should spring up within our Western civilization without attracting our attention



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and making us think. Would we like to have any of those types of government in this country?

Again, what about the creeds and the churches and all the heritage of faith of which they are the outward sign? Is the Christian faith in its basic assumptions more in the mind of the people than a few years ago? It should be. I hope it is.

Last Sunday afternoon I had occasion to call at the home of an officer of this church. He introduced the theme of my sermon of a few hours before and we had a talk about our faith and the life of our time. We both agreed that a real revival of Christianity was long overdue for our national condition. We did not see how we could have any sort of soundness in our country without the moral and spiritual soundness which faith creates. We saw no way of achieving the necessary standards for our deliverance economically without the disciplines of character which are developed religiously. It seemed absurd to us to think that we could separate our creed from our count-

inghouse. What mattered in the churches of our land mattered also in the farms and factories throughout our land.

We both wondered how much this realization was sinking into the consciousness of our people across the land. My friend was more optimistic than I was. He seemed to think that more and more men and women are searching out the churches in an effort to find something that will give them assurance and guidance for life. I was not so sure. I recognized the faithful element of men and women who had never been led astray, who had remained steadfast in season and out of season, and I thanked God for them; but I questioned whether we might not have to endure greater social dislocations before people as a whole began to see the absolute necessity of the New Testament gospel for their lives. The one clear thing was that the Christian constituency must witness and hope and pray.

Aldous Huxley has been the leader and idol of the post-war sophisticates of disillusionment. He has published five books within the last dozen years and each book has been read by an eager group of sympathizers in Great Britain and this country. Huxley has had progressive phases of development and is now a pacifist and a mystic. In his latest book, now being reviewed, he lays down the major virtues. What are they? "Meditation, love, compassion, intelligence, moderation, physical fitness and chastity." I wonder if Huxley realizes that he is traveling much the same path as St. Augustine traveled in the fourth century on his journey from a dissipating paganism to a disciplining Christian faith. A noted critic writes that Huxley "may yet lead his generation, and the younger generation, into a state of grace out of which great things will come." I hope so. But that will not happen until Huxley and his following go where Bunyan's Pilgrim went with his burdens and where countless others have gone with their burdens, namely, to the foot of the cross, bowing low "in wonder, love and praise."

I mention Huxley in particular as a symbol of what may prove to be a trend back to the vital truths of the Christian gospel. There may be many others, plain men and women who could not be classified as intellectuals, who may be feeling their way also and who stand in need of our sympathetic understanding of them. What a demand upon us who claim the Christian name! We must have depth and breadth of faith. We must have patience and endurance and tolerance. We must not grow weary or dismayed.

My chief point, however, is that in these times through which we live we can find the verification of the psalmist's suggestion that a time of change is a time when men and women are compelled to rethink their whole outlook and particularly their relationship to God. For us of today that means a larger awareness of the spiritual, a more acute appreciation of Christ and his gospel of redemption, and a more definite sense of the living Divine Spirit illuminating our ways. If this is the heritage that we are to pass on, real for ourselves and real for those to whom we entrust it, then these years of tumult and confusion are also years of meaning and reward.

Christian Citizenship in America Now

BY L. WENDELL FIFIELD

DURING recent Sundays I have been emphasizing the importance of Christianity in our world. Briefly, this is the position which we have presented: There are three conflicting ideas of life struggling for control of the world—communism, fascism and democracy. The hope of the world, from the point of view of those things that are fine, lovely and worth while, requires the permanence of democracy as against these other ideologies. The danger that they will win in America lies in the peril of the collapse of democracy. Democracy depends upon the quality and character of citizens to make it function adequately. Consequently the way to save democracy and so save the world, if democracy is to save the world, is to develop people who are adequate to function in a representative democracy.

I have suggested that the only adequate method of thus protecting democracy is to Christianize it. Now, when I talk about Christianizing democracy, I do not mean that literally. You cannot Christianize a word; you must Christianize people. The way to Christianize democracy, then, is to Christianize the people who function under a democratic form of government. The paramount task of today, then, is to Christianize the citizens of America, in order that they may function adequately through a democratic form of government and so preserve and maintain the ideals which we cherish.

Many have said to me in the course of this series that the logic of it is very clear and very true, but it seems a hopeless sort of thing in the face of what is going on in the world today to take such a position. I greatly fear that many, because of the immensity of this task, will themselves fail. This will not be because they do not believe in it, but because the task seems so large, and they seem so small. In the face of great challenge people are likely to fold their hands, sit back and say: "If it could be done, it would be fine; but what is the use of my doing anything about it? I am just one; my life and my influence count for so little."

It is especially to this type of person and to all who want seriously to make their individual lives count that I am speaking this morning. The scope of our subject narrows down from the problems of the world, and even the problems of America, to our own individual lives. In the face of world conditions what can we, as individuals, do? What can Christian citizens do in America now? I am going to suggest some very simple things. My sermon this morning will not be at all profound, but I hope that it will be very practical. There will be nothing in it that cannot be done by every one in this audience this morning.

In the first place, I want to underline in our thought the word, "citizen," and ask just exactly what it means from the Christian point of view to be a good citizen in America now. It means to be characterized by certain

qualities of life. I have set down some of these qualities. As I state them you will realize that they are qualities which must characterize us as good citizens. You will also recognize, I am sure, the fact that one of the troubles with our country right now is that many people interpret their citizenship on the basis of other terms than these.

A good citizen will be well informed. One of the dangers that we have in this country is that of well meaning ignorance. There are many people who have the best motives in the world. They mean well but do not have proper and necessary information upon which to base their actions. The consequence is that they become the prey of the demagogue. They become harmful citizens, though their intention is to be helpful.

The second quality is that of fairness. To be a good citizen from the Christian point of view, one must be fair. That is difficult in this day when there are so many cleavages, so many points of view that tend to commit people to certain attitudes and to shut out the consideration of other interests.

THE CHRISTIAN SEES ALL SIDES

The Christian will not permit himself, as a citizen, to be limited in his outlook. If he is a laboring man, he will, of course, be familiar with the position of labor. Yet, if he is a Christian citizen, he will realize that there are other factors than labor in our American life and will seek to be fair in his consideration of them. If he is an employer, he will, of course, be familiar with the problems of the employer. At the same time he will realize that there are other human interests in this world beyond the confines of his individual business or the business life of America. As a Christian he will seek to make the human interest of our nation paramount. He will be fair in his attitude and in his consideration. In seeking to be fair, both capital and labor are going to realize the interest of the general public—an important group which, I feel, are frequently overlooked at the present time.

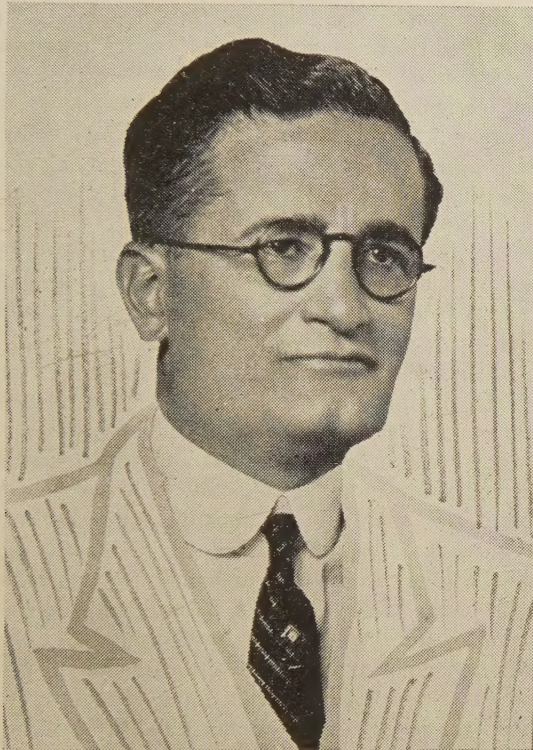
The third quality characteristic of the citizen from the Christian point of view is tolerance. One of the greatest foes of democracy, because it breaks down morale and character, is intolerance. I am greatly concerned, personally, about the inroads that are being made upon our citizenship by intolerance. I have seen the way its ugly head has raised itself under communism and fascism. It has become characteristic of them as a method for the promotion of their own interests. I know how foreign to democracy and to Christianity intolerance is in any form. I would sound a warning this morning that those who are seeking to be Christian citizens must be tolerant in their attitude toward others. We can be tolerant if we are informed and fair.

THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE

In passing, I want to mention another quality. Citizenship in America from the Christian point of view must be unprejudiced. So many people today are motivated by their prejudices, though they think they are exercising their judgments. One of the characteristics of our national life to be condemned strongly at the

present time is that many in high and low places are seeking to develop prejudices and play upon them in the interests of themselves or their individual groups. In doing so they are striking definitely at the heart of the democracy which they have pledged themselves to protect. Prejudice breaks character and lowers morale. When it exists in any form it represents a departure from the Christian principles of real citizenship.

A citizen should be well informed, fair, tolerant, unprejudiced. When these four qualities exist, we have the key to the whole matter of Christian citizenship in America. That key is understanding; not alone understanding situations, but understanding people—their hopes, their purposes, their desires, their problems, their



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struggles. As I listen to the comments of people, presumably Christian, about their fellow citizens, I am frequently distressed by the absence of any genuine human understanding which their statements reveal. Much of the secret of Jesus' strength in his contact with others was the fact that he understood. He understood people. He understood their needs. He understood why they did things that didn't agree with his judgment as to what should be done. He was able to help because he understood. How we need that quality of understanding if we are to be Christian citizens!

Furthermore, the Christian citizen is going to be alert to new truths, to new facts. He is going to make his motto the words of the poet, "New occasions teach new duties." Those who dislike progress and oppose all ideas that are new and different, are far separated in spirit from the one who said, "I come to make all things new." Those who seek to rest wholly upon tradition (and no one would assign a higher position to

the educational value of the past than would I), who in their thinking and living succumb to mental inertia, are not adequate to this new day in which we live.

Furthermore, the good citizen, from the Christian point of view, will be active in civic affairs. He will be active in a fair, impartial manner. His activity will not be motivated by selfish gain for himself or for any group in which he himself is interested. He will be motivated by the interest of the progress of humanity, the safeguarding of democracy, the realization of spiritual values in the minds and hearts of men. He will not, therefore, as an individual citizen, either personally or in cooperation with any group, become involved in the support of anything which tends to lower the caliber and morale of our citizenship, which tends in any way to breed opposition to democracy, which tends to lessen rather than to enhance the spiritual capacities of human life.

LARGER RESPONSIBILITIES

So much for some of the practical things that seem to me to associate themselves with the title, "good citizen," as we view it from the Christian point of view. We now seek to underline "Christian" in connection with citizenship. This leads us out into a field of wider responsibility in which every citizen should share.

Some people think that all there is to being a good citizen is to keep up one's business and one's home, pay taxes, and vote at each general election. All of these things are good, but from the Christian point of view there are larger responsibilities of citizenship, tremendously vital and important.

For example, if we realize the larger responsibilities of citizenship, we shall inevitably become tremendously interested in the schools of our community. This is something that all of us can do. In spite of all the changes in the world in which we are living, our school system in America has not moved forward as rapidly as it should in its adjustment to these changes. I believe that this is not the fault of educators. Rather it is due to the fact that the general public in America is not as yet aroused to the fundamental relationship between sound, competent, adequate education, and the preservation of the ideals of democracy.

The fascist and communist states know of the connection, and the school is given every opportunity. In the fascist and communist states, education does not have to fight for its life and use the tag ends to carry on its activity. Under fascism and communism, youth is at the front. Primary consideration is given to the process of educating the youth, training them in the ideologies of communism and fascism. These states are building for the future. They know that if we take a child in the formative period and train him in a definite point of view, we can do much to educate out of him those natural impulses and ideals which are the foundation of democracy.

I believe that the Christian citizen is going to recognize this situation. He is going to become increasingly interested in adequate support for our schools. He is going to recognize that while good roads and other material improvements are important, if we do

not develop educated people who use these improvements, the whole structure is going to break down. There should be on the part of Christian citizens an increasing support of our schools by voting for measures which protect and develop them, through membership in the parent-teacher associations, through understanding and cooperation. When Christian citizenship is thus interpreted, we shall no longer deny our educational forces the facilities they need, but will see to it that the educational leaders of America have resources adequate to the challenge and the opportunity of the youth of our land.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER-BUILDING

Another phase of Christian citizenship is adequate support of the character-building agencies in every community. This support should be considered not as charity but as an essential expression of our Christian citizenship in the face of the present world challenge.

One of the ways to start doing something for democracy in America now is to support the agencies in the community which seek to develop the character and the morale of our people. This should be especially obvious in connection with those institutions which seek to serve the poor and unfortunate. These are the people who feel that they are mistreated and do not have a chance. They constitute the hotbed for the nourishment of anti-democratic ideals. Yet many people who seek to protect their business and their homes from communism and fascism never give a nickel of their money nor a moment of their time to such agencies in the community.

We must understand that Christian citizenship is something more than a matter of voting and paying taxes. It is a matter of building—building in character and morale. Every one of us can do this. Every one of us can have some helpful relationship to the character-building agencies in our city, not alone as a matter of sympathy but as a matter of honest conviction as to their constructive value.

Answering the question as to the reason for the chaos of our world, Einstein said that it was due to the breakdown of the moral life of people. His diagnosis is impartial and sound. I submit this morning that Christian citizenship inevitably demands activity in the maintenance and redevelopment of the morale and the stamina of people. We should begin with our own lives and make them right. Then we should move out to the support of the institutions in the community that seek to make people better.

One further consideration suggests itself in connection with our theme. If my thesis is true, it is inevitable that one vital expression of Christian citizenship is the support of the church. If the church is not what it ought to be, then the Christian citizen should not stand on the outside, criticizing and condemning. He should get into the church and make it what it ought to be.

Many people remind me of a man on a sinking ship. The ship is going down. The lifeboats are being lowered. But this man stands back and looks at the lifeboat to which he has been assigned and says: "That

lifeboat is not perfect. If I were to build one, I could build a better one. I think there's a leak in it." And so because the lifeboat does not measure up to all of his ideas, he refuses to get in and goes to his death.

Here we are on the ship of democracy. Many think it is going down. Here are the lifeboats, the churches of the country, and many people because they do not like something about the churches refuse to get into the lifeboats at all. Even if there is a leak in the boat, it is better to get in and help to bail out the boat than it is to go down to death.

If my thesis is true that the hope of democracy is Christianity, the ascendancy of spiritual values in the life of the world, then the largest responsibility of citizenship is community helpfulness. As well as personal development through the church, Christian citizenship requires the support of the church with money and with time. It requires membership in the church, whose methods of procedure make it possible for honest worship. But more than all these it requires service for people through the church. Nominal church membership, mere outward "belonging," does not fill the bill.

There are many opportunities for this usefulness. The most vital place in America for the development of those Christian ideals which are the final standard of democracy is the church school. The forces of secular education do what they can, but they are limited at every hand by legal restrictions and restraints. There is no single place in the whole structure of our American social order where a man or woman can make influence count more strategically for the best kind of democracy than in the educational departments of our churches. The influence of a consecrated, understanding Sunday school teacher cannot be overestimated, and yet every church faces a struggle to get enough teachers for the classes in the church school. There can be no more helpful thing for the cause of democracy and the resistance of communism and fascism in America than for large numbers of men and women of ability and vision to volunteer as teachers in our church schools. This would more effectively improve the character and morale of our citizenship than any other single thing. If you really want to make your life count, this is a definite and concrete opportunity.

In closing this sermon I return to emphasize one of the thoughts of last Sunday morning. I suppose that really the most effective thing that any of us can do to make America Christian is to be genuinely and obviously Christian ourselves. The story is told in the New Testament of a group of people who became followers of Jesus—in other words, Christians. The reason they did this was that they had seen some other people who were Christians. The Scripture has it, "They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." Because contact with Christ had made these people so fine, so unselfish, so strong and so true, others wanted to have a like experience. The greatest single personal power in the world is the power of example. In this regard you and I and all of us can be Christian citizens and can help to make other Christian citizens in America now.

Sensing the Infinite

BY W. P. LEMON

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded. I Kings 8:27.

THE scene is the opening of the great Temple of Solomon, an event that had long been prepared for and still longer had stirred the aspirations of the people. The heirs of the past were in the act of consecration, and this section of Scripture gives a redactor's version of the celebration. There were no shorthand reporters available in those days, and it is fairly certain that we have, as in other classics, a free rendition of the dedicatory prayer. However, what interests us is that here we have no superstitious confining of God to a sanctuary, but the plain statement that such is impossible. In the very act of consummating the temple for worship, the leader acknowledged paradoxically that no building of God can really house him.

I submit that this seems a very modern mood, although it reflects the history of nearly three thousand years ago. In the very moment of our achievement there is a deep awareness of this very sentiment, and we too, within our hearts, overhear the questions: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" How we pride ourselves on the acids of modernity, and how deflating it is to find we are only echoes of echoes and plagiarists, or at least unconscious quoters of other and earlier convictions!

With all the allusions to the tabernacle and the temple as the dwelling place of God, there is found this parallel statement that there is not enough accommodation for the Most High, and that our most marvelous structure is inadequate to interpret the Eternal Presence. Isaiah, for instance, makes God ask much the same query: "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house you would build for me, where would you rear me a home?" Jeremiah, in the very vestibule of the temple, is even sterner, and he interprets the Divine as saying: "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place." Do not rely on false phrases like "This is the temple of God, his very own temple, his very own temple." Ezekiel, the ecclesiastically minded, makes God's presence contingent upon the inner life of the people, and he actually portrays the exodus and return of the Most High from the buildings, as the people depart from or return to the ways of the Eternal. Amos even waxes sarcastic and says: "Go to the sanctuary of Bethel, go on with your sin! Pile sin on sin at Gilgal! Aye, sacrifice in the morning, and every third day pay your tithes, . . . announce your free will offering, for you love all that, you Israelites!"

What is startling is that priests as well as prophets have no magical view of the shrine or temple. Malachi, another sacramentalist, goes so far as to say that God gets more satisfaction from pagan shrines and altars than from the professional and prostituted ceremonies

of the orthodox worship of his day. He puts into the mouth of God the request to lock the church door: "Will no one close the temple doors to keep you from kindling useless fires upon my altar? I take no delight in you, the Lord of hosts declares. While my name is being honored among pagans from sunrise to sunset and a pure offering burned . . . you are dishonoring my name."

The New Testament is even more explicit in this paradox of sensing the Infinite. The early Christian preaching, such as is reported in Paul's sermon on Mars Hill, is of a God who dwelleth not in a temple made with hands. The individual is elevated above even the great Jerusalem temple in the Gospels, and the Fourth Gospel gives us the magnificent revelation that God is served in no particular temple, but in spirit and in truth, because he is Spirit. Then the apocalyptic vision, placed at the end of our edition of the Bible, gives us a city of God without a temple, as if to prove that the church was made for man and not man for the church. Indeed, in the passage already cited from Matthew, our Lord quotes the instance when a hungry outlaw and his men actually penetrated into the holy place and ate the bread of the altar. This would have been, under ordinary circumstances, an act of sacrilege. It was cited to show that the basic needs of mankind were of more value than all or any forms of worship.

'ALL MEN STAND IN NEED OF THE GODS'

The most basic and realistic of human relationships is found in the sensing of the Infinite. "All men stand in need of the gods," says Homer. "The Eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms," is an inspired utterance of the Hebrew religion. "Oh, why did you not come and tell us sooner?" said an Indian chief to a missionary. "We have waited so long to know of the Everlasting Spirit." The whole world, ancient and modern, conservative and liberal, pagan and puritan, white and colored, male and female, plebeian and patrician, crude and cultured, at some time, echo the sublime words of the psalmist:

As the heart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God;
When shall I come and appear before God?

If we listen sympathetically to the Upanishads of India; to the early morning intonation of the Arab as, from the minaret, he calls the people to prayer; to the Negro spiritual voiced by God's image in ebony; to the *Kyrie eleison* chanted in high mass in the Catholic cathedral, or to the plain hymn of sincere people in a humble place of worship, we can hear the abysmal depths of a common humanity, and feel the touch of nature that makes the whole world kin.

We have demonstrated the failure of other methods of uniting our splintered humanity. Propinquity has brought about nationalism, especially, since the Napoleonic wars, but it has failed signally to bring our rebellious spirits under control. We say, with Edith Cavell, "Patriotism is not enough." Ethnology cannot save us. That we are bound to some by racial and

biological ties has failed to bring enduring peace. Gregariousness is a poor cement, unless it is motivated by something other than mere herding together. Utilitarian and prudential considerations produce only negative virtues. Even cultural advantages shared by the privileged few are powerless to resist the other belligerent elements in us. A university does not always breed a cosmopolitan spirit, and small souls and snobs may be found amidst the most erudite and encyclopedic minds. "If ye love those who love you, what thank have ye?" said an Oriental to his fellows, and a Mutual Admiration Society of those who dwell in a Palace of Art is of little aid to the world of all of us.

SENSE OF COMMON DEPENDENCE LEADS TO GOD

Does not our ultimate oneness reside in a sense of creaturehood? Our little groups, professing to have infallible insights, apostolic authority, monopolistic thoughts of the Most High, and exact creedal passports to the Everlasting, stir us no more.

This sense of common dependence is revealed in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world. The inward voice or *daemon* of Socrates that allowed him to face the judges unafraid; the mythological peopling of the universe with angels, nymphs, fauns and minor deities; the Mystic Presence of the author of Psalm 139 bear testimony to it. The sense of "something far more deeply interfused" that Wordsworth experienced; the verse of Scripture that came to Augustine; the "hound of heaven" that followed Francis Thompson; the voices that Joan heard—these were all forms of creaturehood even as is a sense of hunger. When Sir Francis Younghusband reports a sense of love at the heart of the universe which overwhelmed his soul on the mountains of India and remains with him to this day; when Havelock Ellis in his *Dance of Life* can describe a conversion; when Carlyle on Leith Walk, Edinburgh, passes from the "Everlasting Nay" to the "Everlasting Yea"—it were folly to dismiss these as atomistic and isolated human records. These are evidences of a universal tether that binds us to the Most High.

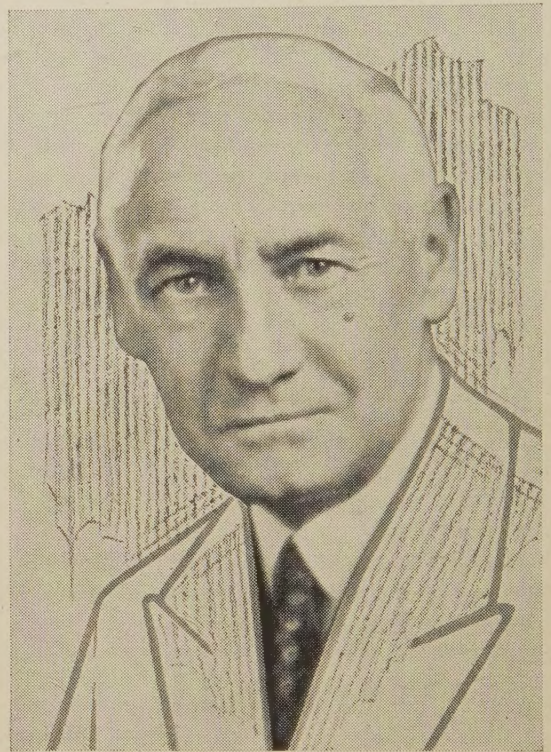
In this effort to sense the Infinite we have the most distinctive and the most cementing of all common ties. None is more strong among the communities of the world, as no sentiment is more primitive than this instinct of worship. If nothing higher be found than that which stimulates the senses, men will walk in millions around a little embalmed Russian man who trod the earth for fifty-four years, and who has lain in state for the past thirteen years in a magnificent mausoleum. So Lenin has become the icon, the mental image of explorative myriads who seek a terrestrial salvation.

WORSHIP AND MORAL STANDARDS

Here our credulity begins: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth?" With the poet we instinctively reach "beyond the natural man, the better beast," and desire to use our senses, "not the sense of sense." We must transcend the senses even to evaluate them; for, unless there be something deeper than flux, flux

can never know itself. Thus we become aware both of the inadequacy and the limitations of sense experience. Just because we are aware that no house can contain the Maker of us all, and that all thoughts that seek to explain him must burst through language and escape, we are liable to grave mistakes in our relation with the Infinite.

There is no possibility (even were such desirable) of separating the building of a house of worship from the moral and political standards of the day. Churches are not built in a social vacuum, and even as the architecture pays some witness to the age, the Byzantine to the East, the Gothic to the West, so are the ideals of worshipers reflected in motives and purposes. For



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instance, the imperialism of David, the acquisition of new territory and the spoils of war made possible the magnificence of the Solomonic temple. The affluence and success of the south after the Civil War, and the Deuteronomic revival in 621 B.C., contributed to the superstitious veneration of the building in the time of Jeremiah, and called forth the denunciation of the prophet. There is little doubt that the building of the temple in the time of Haggai was really motivated by political causes in the interest of natural independence. Zerubbabel, the governor, was a partisan of the Persians, and favored their victory. A little later, when Zechariah was written, the emphasis was shifted from the secular powers to the authority of the priest, and Joshua is given precedence in the writings of that prophet. Already the issue between church and state is marked, even, as in Ezekiel's visionary temple, there is an effort to restrict the power of the prince in the constitution.

We gain little by hiding from ourselves the slump that has taken place in organized religion, and everywhere there are signs of apathy toward the conventional, even while a definite hostility may not be visible. God's causes suffer more from being sat upon than from being blown up, says Sir George Adam Smith, and as far back as a hundred years ago we hear Carlyle talking about our church clothes being out at the elbow. It is certain that, as a human family, we have lost something of the sense of dependence upon the Most High.

WHY HAS REVERENCE GONE?

This loss of veneration, of reverential attitudes, of contrite humility, and of worship may be due to many causes.

First, may it not be traced to the fact that we inherit signs and symbols that have lost their potency and significance to a rising generation? We use the word "By Jove" as a classical profanity without much disturbance to ourselves or others, but when men indulge in modern oaths and provoke the feeling of blasphemy in the conservative, it is for precisely the same reason that Zeus or Jove has become a mere expletive in our vocabulary. Both the concepts of Zeus and of God have lost any real content to inspire our hearts and evoke our worship.

Again, we have become terrestrially minded, and the objects of awe that moved our forebears have become commonplace or at least explicable to us. The church and organized religion have not kept ahead of the explanations of science. Hence, the naturalization of the spiritual has resulted in what Professor Hocking calls the quandary of religious thought. It is not any inherent hostility of reason to religion, but the plain fact is that when we explain what was once regarded as miraculous in natural terms and for the sake of understanding, then it inevitably follows that we have a leveling rather than a lifting process. Thus, the colors fade and appear drab even as stage scenery in the light of day.

Once again the *understanding*, in the Kantian sense, and in contrast to *reason*, has become more and more analytical with dire results to life. Our finer senses are atrophied in one field by excessive specialization in another. We pay dearly for microscopic knowledge which yields only a macroscopic ignorance. The contractions of life have so "cabin'd, cribb'd and confin'd" us that our very specialization has served to give us meaning for the particular and meaninglessness for the general. Then we have talked so much of relativity that everything seems relative and as subject to the vagaries of individualism. Yet if everything is relative there is no sense in calling anything relative. "Relative" and "absolute" are correlative terms like "tall" and "short," "rich" and "poor." A standard of reference, a relation to something, calls for at least a practical absolute.

GOD NOT STATIC, NOR ABSOLUTE

There can be no greater sense limitation than that which comes from being out of moral sympathy with

the Infinite. Yet the danger of a sense of God out of proportion with a sense of our senses is not wholly a figment of the imagination. There is a God-intoxication which makes, as in Orientalism, an identification of the divine with the totality of life so that there is the weakening of moral distinctions. There is a sort of religious totalitarianism which, under the claim of understanding the part from the point of view of the whole, and not the whole in the light of the part, absorbs all values so that they are beyond recognition.

It is the very glory of our faith to maintain a balanced concept of the Infinite. God is not removed into the static realm, nor is he identified with the absolute, but is regarded as an existent among many existents, and as a self-conscious Being whose favor and fellowship depend upon the sincerity of life and heart of each believer.

In a sense, history can be interpreted as an oscillation between object and subject. Time was when there was provided a ready-made, comparatively simple and unified world view. Man started with a world of objects, and the church, with its monopolistic thought, gave us a hand-me-down but unambiguous world order. Then followed a swing toward a private universe, with the result that we have substituted psychological terms for theological ones. Instead of the doctrine of depravity, we have obsessions; instead of sin there is the "*libido*." The human family has become largely introspective, and at times morbid because, with all our minute meanings, we are minus a world view. Our world seems to be saying today with Nietzsche, "*Ich habe meine Gründe vergessen*" (I have forgotten why I ever began).

When we turn to the sources of our religion, we find that the sentiment in the text is supported by the provision of the Hebrew concept of God. The second commandment expressly forbids any and all representations of the Infinite, because this would give a static content to the word "God," and, with a permanent image, there would follow certain stereotyped and conventional descriptions that might be weights and not wings. We read, it is true, that Moses talked to God face to face; that Isaiah "saw the Lord high and lifted up," and that the people "saw God and did eat and drink," yet these were special experiences rather than official likenesses to be transmitted. All the passages that deal with idolatry, with sporadic and individualistic worship on high places, and with that declaration that "No man can see God and live" served to keep open the connotation of the idea of God so that each generation could both accrue and incorporate from the widening experience of the Most High.

LOVE OF CERTAINTY CAN LEAD ASTRAY

It is the glory of Christianity that instead of teaching a Platonic doctrine of knowledge as a recovery and resuscitation of the past through memory, or of a monopolistic system of completed thought, such as have at times been the concern of organized religion, God is revealed as One upon whose track we ever are and whom we never completely overtake. He is declared to be the One who is to come no less than the One who

"was" and "is," and Jesus is set forth as the Way, the Mediator, the Guide who will put our feet upon an endless path to the inexhaustible knowledge of the Infinite.

Have we not yearned for guarantees in advance of action? Our love of certainty has too frequently turned the adventure of life into an insurance scheme. Now we must have apostolic succession to guard the validity of the sacraments. Later, there must be an infallible message, infallibly transmitted and infallibly interpreted. A passing mark is required in doctrines as a passport into the divine presence. Thus we have made the divine to be coincident with correct sensations in perfect hearing, seeing, feeling, and in the datum of the senses. A monopolistic corporation in religious thought needs a Sherman law, even more than does a business corporation.

We have made Jesus into an external authority in explicit defiance of his own teaching. He was careless of man's estimate of himself—"All manner of sin and blasphemy against the Son of Man may be forgiven." He took pains to puncture the idea of succession in his word that David called the Messiah "Lord," and freely allowed that there was none good save one—God. His specific task was said to be the "Way" to God and not an end, to bring us to God and not to eclipse him. "My going away," he is reported to have said, "is for your own good. The Spirit alone can lead men into all the truth."

All our churches and institutional forms of religion are efforts to contain God in confines of our own making. As custodians of tradition, as corporate forms of experience to save the individual from "trial and error," they are necessary and invaluable. Yet, they must submit to the universal test in human fellowship. Do they bring humans together? Are they reminding us of our common birth marks more than of our differences?

The medium of the senses, indeed, is necessary, but it is clear that all mental development is toward the universal from the particular, to laws rather than to atomistic information. The way toward the Infinite is doubtless through but also beyond the senses. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." It is the very function of all representation to keep us on the *qui vive*; to stimulate the senses to the unseen, and to inspire our earth-bound humanity to mental and moral explorations.

THE INFINITE IN THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

A group of Oxford men planning, preparing and risking their lives to scale the last great unscaled mountain of the world, Mount Everest, is the best analogy of our faith, and not the man with a muck-rake scratching among the straws. The Soviet explorers who floated fifteen miles on an ice floe are examples of a yearning other than for continuous physical existence, as they risk death on the frontiers of the universe.

The faith of Christendom is that the Infinite has been sensed in the Man Christ Jesus. He is the articulate thought of God, the Word made flesh. In

him there is the merging of divine and human so that there is the humanizing of the Most High and the divinization of the human through being conformed to the *image* of his Son. The after-image that our religion leaves upon the retina of the world's eye is of a Judas, depraved and degenerate, who after a companionship with the True, the Beautiful and the Good, the altogether lovely, denied the Good, and betrayed the embodiment of Truth. Yet even in this tragedy, the positive exceeds the negative. We have the image of one who emerged as the Son of Man, the incarnation of our common humanity. He it was who conquered the heart of the deserter, the denier and the betrayer. Timeless and spaceless, we retain for our salvation the conviction of a human who can share the very throne of the Everlasting, and be God's right hand man until all things are under control, and God is made all in all.

The Resurrection of Barabbas

BY TALMAGE C. JOHNSON

Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.
Luke 23:18.

WE HAVE thought much and spoken much of the resurrection of Jesus. It is well that we should. But perhaps we ought to think also of the resurrection of Barabbas. Just as truly as does the spirit of Jesus still live in the world, even so does the spirit of Barabbas still abide. In each of us is resurrected one of the twain. The choice is still Christ or Barabbas.

Now when Jesus stood in the hall of Pilate, the multitude assembled there was compelled to choose between him and a murderous thief called Barabbas. Had you and I been there that day, would we have joined in the shout, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas"? Never, never, we declare. Perhaps we had better not be too sure.

LOVE VERSUS HATE

Jesus loved humanity. Barabbas hated his fellow men. None so poor or mean that Jesus did not care for him or her. Looking at the crowds that came to him, Jesus had compassion upon them. He saw them as they were—humanity stripped of pretense, men and women shorn of camouflage. But still he loved them. Barabbas saw humanity, too, and hated it. Every man and woman was for him a potential victim, someone to be used for his own ends. Which do we choose, Jesus or Barabbas? Well, today the choice is expressed not in words but in deeds. If we love, Jesus is resurrected within us. If we despise and hate, Barabbas lives again.

Jesus helped people. Barabbas hurt people. No one in need came to Jesus in vain. He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf. He cleansed the leper and

restored to sanity the insane. He fed the hungry and turned not away from the afflicted. He ministered to every kind of human need. When he himself was weary and worn, he still could be patient with everyone who sought his aid. Nor did he limit his ministry to those in physical or mental distress. Conscience-stricken sinners, earnest seekers after truth, souls hungry for life could always gain access to his presence. Little children did not annoy him. Members of a race despised were not shunned by him. No human being seeking help was ever denied by him. Barabbas robbed and murdered men.

Which do we prefer, Jesus or Barabbas? If we help



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fear for their ease and comfort, they fear the disturbance of their complacency. "Jesus is too idealistic," they say; "Barabbas is practical." To be sure, no one today professes allegiance to Barabbas. Many profess loyalty to Christ. But "by their fruits ye shall know them," not by their professions.

The resurrection of Jesus means the end of selfishness. The resurrection of Barabbas means selfishness rampant. Which do you and I prefer? We cannot have both. We must choose between the two of them.

Jesus was crucified. They laid his body in a tomb and sealed it with a stone. But Jesus rose from the tomb and lived again. When and where and how Barabbas died, we do not know. But that his spirit lives again, we know. Men are still crucifying Jesus and releasing Barabbas.

It is the spirit of Barabbas, released, that would work for a pittance those who must have work, or would sentence children to industrial slavery. It is the spirit of Barabbas, released, that would snatch territory from the weak and give it to the strong. It is the spirit of Barabbas, released, that persecutes the Jew in Germany, turns brother against brother in Spain, rules out God in Russia, fosters militarism in Italy, puts money above humanity in America.

BUT THE CHRIST SPIRIT STILL LIVES

But the spirit of the risen Lord lives, too, in the world today. It is his spirit that gives impetus to every movement for peace and good will among men. It is his spirit that brought to pass the abolition of political human slavery and today seeks to banish economic human slavery. It is his spirit that moves men of different races toward mutual understanding. It is his spirit that cares for orphan children, supports hospitals for the needy, and ministers to all kinds of human needs through social welfare agencies.

Which spirit lives in you and in me? It is still Christ or Barabbas.

our fellow men, Jesus lives again. If we hurt and injure men, Barabbas is resurrected.

Jesus gave. Barabbas took. Jesus was ever ready to give to those in need. He gave of his time; he gave of his strength; he gave of his love. Finally he gave his life that men might have life. Barabbas robbed. No pity moved his heart. Which do we choose, Christ or Barabbas? If we give, give freely and gladly and generously of whatever we have that others need, the spirit of Jesus lives again. If we rob and take advantage of others, though we do it within the law, Barabbas is resurrected.

BARABBAS RELEASED TODAY

Men have not changed much since in Pilate's court they cried: "Away with this man. Let him be crucified. Release unto us Barabbas." They can understand Barabbas. They can deal with him. But Jesus puzzles them. They fear what will happen if he is released in the world. They fear for their ill-gotten gains, they

I Know a Name

I KNOW a soul that is steeped in sin,
That no man's art can cure;
But I know a Name, a Name, a Name,
That can make that soul all pure.

I know a life that is lost to God,
Bound down by things of earth;
But I know a Name, a Name, a Name,
That can bring that soul new birth.

I know of lands that are sunk in shame,
Of hearts that faint and tire;
But I know a Name, a Name, a Name,
That can set those lands on fire.
Its sound is a brand, its letters flame,
I know a Name, a Name, a Name,
That will set those lands on fire.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

Faith That Advances Into the Unknown

By JOHN W. SHACKFORD

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. Hebrews 11:8.

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfection of our faith. Hebrews 12:1(b)-2(a).

ABRAHAM is here described as moving forward at the call of God to the discovery and conquest of the unknown future. Throughout the whole discourse on faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews is the portrayal of those who were ever taking their departure out of the known into the unknown; ever advancing against odds beyond their own resources to cope with.

Faith, says the writer, is that quality of soul which enables one to lay hold on that which is beyond and grasp it as a reality, when it is as yet but hoped for; it is that which, unlike the scientific, is evidence of that for which there is no physical or logical proof. It depends upon an assurance of realities growing out of confidence in the character of God. Faith in any person whom we absolutely trust is a projection of confidence based upon something unseen and yet very real and dependable. When that person is God, who is not subject to the vicissitudes and limitations of men, then faith becomes the supreme assurance. It is this assurance through faith that enables us to move out to meet the unknown.

FAITH IN RELATION TO TIME

A mysterious and often terrifying fact is the movement of all things forward through what we call time. Everything changes and moves forward from its present state to something else. This change through time the physicists call entropy. Dismay may easily grip our hearts at the thought: "I cannot stay here, however much I would like. I must ever be setting sail for some port beyond the horizon. Or, if I do not set my sails and steer my course, I must drift with the ever blowing winds and the ceaseless tides of time." The choice is inescapable—either we must be swept along by forces that operate through time, or, by the help of some inner force, we must shape and fashion our course.

Faith supplies this needed power that makes all the difference between hopeless fatalism and courageous purpose. Fatalism has always been a slough of despond into which vast numbers have fallen because they have felt themselves swept on by forces beyond their control. The forces of nature, of society—the very Fates seem to laugh at them. "What's the use in resisting?" they ask. "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." A man is seen as a bubble on the sea of time. No purpose, no abiding meaning. Why struggle? Accept the inevitable and drift with the tide. Adjust to the conditions about you and move on with the crowd.

That is the spirit of the world. Adjust to your world. That is the philosophy that underlies much of the education of our time.

In contrast to this, there is another spirit that attempts the impossible; that steers toward the ports that are out of sight; that creates of the nonexistent that which is worthy to abide. No one will deny that at the heart of every such endeavor there must be faith of some sort. And wherever the purposes are of the highest, there must be faith in that which is both worthy and enduring. Where there is no abiding reality back of all, as in much of the thinking of the East and in not a little in the West, the very struggle to press beyond into the unachieved future seems an evil. "Why not let well enough alone?" But where there is faith in the eternal reality of a divine Person whose purpose runs through all and shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will—such a faith finds the highest inspiration in attempting the impossible, in reaching forward after the attainment of the revealed will of God, in moving out into the unknown country. It seeks and works to create that city, that society, that quality and measure of life which as yet has not been brought to earth, but which is seen by faith and in the seeking of which there is both strength and joy.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SAVING FAITH

This faith rests upon the character of God—his trustworthiness and his goodness.

Faith takes hold upon the trustworthiness of God. Life is not a mirage—a vision, across the shifting sands of the desert, of those things that have no meaning in reality. The things that are seen are indeed not abiding, yet they are forms of expression of him who is abiding. Because our God is the source of reality and his purpose moves through all, we may share with him, when he works through us, in the creative process. We may go forth with him in the discovery of the unknown; in creating that which is not; in shaping our world, not blindly, but in line with the will of him who is eternal truth. We may be faithless, but he abideth faithful. There is possible here a sense of security and of meaning which makes moral purposes and striving possible.

But God is more than dependable. He is good. He is love. The purpose of God is revealed in creative love outgoing in behalf of the beloved. That purpose is manifest in Christ.

Belief in such a God lifts faith to new heights. God is not aloof in the vast recesses of his unapproachable being. He is not a kind of inevitable, merciless force, to which we must submit as to the blinding storm. He sustains a relation to men, and he is reliable in his expressed purpose to help men and to work with them and through them to ends which without him they cannot attain.

But the purpose of God is not a soft sentimentality toward men that would give them all the pleasures of sense and of time possible, and permit no suffering. It is something far nobler and higher than that. It is the loving purpose that seeks attainment and achievement of divine likeness in his children, and that, there-

fore, is willing to discipline men and nations for this purpose. The pain throb that spurs on to higher and more noble struggle and serves to disabuse men of the notion of the supreme value of mere pleasures and things—this he uses for his purpose.

There is thus a basis of faith not only that things will come to pass according to the inscrutable purpose of God, but that that purpose will be a purpose of love and of worthy destiny, even beyond all we can ask or think or plan. Because he had this sort of faith, Abraham could go out into the great unknown with the calm confidence that he who had called him would be his friend wherever he went. This is why he could



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seek a city whose foundations were not yet laid save in the thought of God.

This is far more than confidence in estimated power and knowledge; more than faith in the sufficiency of man, or in the power of a nation or a people to work its will; more than confidence based on a present estimate of resources. It is faith that advances into the unknown when there are no tangible resources to count upon. It holds on when defeat comes and when there is nothing in sight to justify the thing—when the only hope is God. It holds on under the shadow of the cross, and on the cross, when all is dark—and when all men forsake.

In the dark night before Calvary Jesus could cry, "I have overcome the world." In the face of what any man of us would have said was disaster and utter defeat ahead, he could say: I must go on to Jerusalem and to death and to that beyond, to which death will lead. In the face of standards and attitudes of the times that discounted the value of the underprivileged,

the sinner and the outcast, he could say that the Kingdom of God belongs to the poor and that these despised sinners and forgotten outcasts would go into the Kingdom before the self-righteous because they were more ready to trust God and follow in his way.

He could believe in the Kingdom of God that is to be, the city whose spires are not yet against the horizon, because he believed in the Builder of that city and in his purpose to press the cause of holy love against all the forces of evil.

It is possible for us to believe in the Kingdom of God, and in all that makes for a better order of human life, only when our faith pierces beyond the seen to the very presence and nature of God and his purpose as revealed in Jesus. For those who share with Jesus in this faith, life is seen not as a shimmering mirage across the shifting sands of being, but as the process through which the eternal God works with us in achieving his purpose of love. Thus hope is born. Courage is born. Strength is born. Endurance is possible. Even joyousness in the midst of present disaster and defeat is possible. There is the deep joy of sharing in that which has meaning to God. Joy may be mingled with suffering, but there is the joy of suffering with those we love because we love and because we know there is a beyond of value and meaning that has its basis in the eternal fidelity and purpose of God, our Father, revealed in Jesus.

SOME EFFECTS OF THIS FAITH

Those who possess this faith will not overvalue material possessions and temporary pleasures. These must be measured in terms of their permanent contribution to our development and to that of others. Not that temporary enjoyment is not good of itself, but that its deeper significance is in relation to our progress in the attainment of the purpose of God for us.

Nor will these possessors of faith exaggerate the evil of suffering—since this may in the end work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Not because suffering is good in itself, but because suffering may be made to turn to good in the end, and because it is better to suffer and be aroused to strive than to be content to drift and to die without struggle. Only that suffering is wholly evil which cannot serve the purposes of good—that suffering which is neither the price of effort to achieve nor the spur to attainment, but the unheeded consequence of drifting and surrender to the forces that destroy.

Furthermore, they will not be discouraged at temporary defeats and halts in the forces of the good. "Time is on our side," Gladstone once said. Time is on the side of the persistent purposes of God. Sin is self-destroying. Love is creative. The eternal years of God are on the side of truth and righteousness. We can afford not to be impatient while we are faithful in pressing forward into the new country, and building the new city whose spires belong to the plans of God's future.

Yes, we may believe where we cannot prove. There is much talk today of the crisis and of the outcome as being determined by the crisis. But we must under-

stand that crises do not come without causes, and it is possible for us to work with God to prepare the way for the right outcome in the crisis that is to be. He who faces the future with God may joyfully do his best, and at length lay down the task, knowing that he has been working with him who in the end will overcome; that his investments have not been wasted.

WE MUST GO ON!

So it is. We must go on. But how? Shall we advance with courage and hope to the achievement of character and abiding values? Or shall we be swept along by the storms of life and the forces of evil, only to be stranded in the end on some hopeless shore?

We must go on—from childhood to youth; from youth to maturity; from young manhood and womanhood to the burdens and stress of middle life. Then our strength must wane until, at length, the shadows of old age creep upon us. And finally, we must all stand facing that inevitable unknown country beyond this bourne of time and place. Our only hope is in the Builder and Maker of that city that is always out of sight in the great beyond. We can joyfully advance if we are sure that "God, the Eternal is our home, and underneath are the everlasting arms"; that we are undergirded by the purposes of him who cannot fail us.

What may not be accomplished in this world by those who have this faith! How many things that so easily worry us become small in significance when the larger purposes of God sweep into view! How our otherwise drooping spirits are reinforced!

In our services we shall be singing familiar hymns, and reading familiar parables, and lifting our hearts to God in a rhythm as ancient as the need of men for him. And yet, facing the unfamiliar demands of the morrow, we must let these familiar experiences be pregnant with a new authority and impulse.

There are two stanzas of that solemn hymn, "Faith of Our Fathers," which are at once a parable of the past and a challenge to the future. They are a parable of the past, for in not a few of our hymnals one or both of them have been omitted in recent decades, almost as though the compilers believed they were obsolete and outworn. They are not. Only our faith had grown shallow and our hope too easy. They belong in the hymn, just as the virtue they portray belongs to our souls.

Thank God these stanzas are in our present hymnals. Let us write them on our hearts, to say for us what none of us could say so well:

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free,
And blest would be their children's fate,
Though they, like them, should die for thee:
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death.

Faith of our fathers, God's great pow'r
Shall win all nations unto thee;
And, through the truth that comes from God,
Mankind shall then indeed be free:
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death.

Not without Honor

BY HENRY KENDALL BOOTH

And he came to Nazareth . . . and began to teach in the synagogue . . . and the Nazarenes were offended . . . and they rose up and cast him out. And he could do no mighty work there and marveled at their unbelief Mark 6:1-6; Luke 4:16-30 (passim).

IT was the Sabbath morning in Nazareth on a clear November day of the year 25. In groups of twos and threes, out of the doors of their stone houses, the Nazarenes passed down the main street of the city and walked decorously and quietly, as befitted the Sabbath, toward the synagogue whose imposing façade rose at the end of the street. With its five richly ornamented Corinthian pillars supporting a peristyle covered with carved vines and olive branches, it was the most pretentious building in Nazareth.

Entering its central doorway the congregation slowly assembled in the great gray interior, lighted by high windows in the massive wall. At the end of the room was a raised platform, behind which a purple curtain of rich velvet, embroidered with a golden five-pointed star, hung before the great chest of cedarwood, the Ark, in which reposed the sacred rolls of the Law and Prophets.

Clad in gorgeous embroidered silken robes, the ruler of the synagogue passed with stately tread across the platform and seated himself in the carved chair by the massive reading desk. One by one the elders of the synagogue took their places in the "chief seats," huge upholstered chairs in front of the Ark and its purple curtain. One chair still remained vacant, and on it the eyes of the entire congregation seemed focused. After the punctilious custom of that day and community it was always reserved for some visiting rabbi, and this day it was to be occupied by Nazareth's now famous son, who had suddenly become the center of interest in Galilee. Tales of his strange new gospel, his marvelous cures of leprosy and blindness, had been brought to Nazareth, and the market place had buzzed with excited gossip and feverish speculation. And now he was here in his old home town, and the ruler of the synagogue had invited him to occupy the seat of honor today, and tense expectancy was in the air.

There was a sudden hush as a white-robed figure passed through the doorway. Moving slowly across the platform, while the ruler of the synagogue rose to honor him, came Jesus, once the carpenter of Nazareth, now a famous rabbi. With consuming curiosity the eager eyes devoured him as he took his place in the seat of honor. His face, so familiar to them all, seemed to have subtly changed, and a strange new beauty and power shone in his calm countenance. What thoughts must have passed through Jesus' mind as he gazed into their burning eyes! Over yonder was one whom he had helped in his hour of despair. By the wall sat another whom he had befriended in a time of shame. How many of those friends of a lifetime had he sought to serve during those long years! But today he saw in their eyes only curiosity, criticism and jealousy. They

could not believe that one whom they had known so well and so familiarly could be so great or notable. Jesus found the same reception men have always found when they go back to their home city from success or fame—incredulity and doubt. And how aptly he summed it up on that day: "A prophet is not without honor save in his own city and among his own kinsfolk and friends."

Rising now in his place, the ruler of the synagogue turned his face heavenward and in a deep voice repeated the two brief prayers with which the services opened. Then the whole congregation rose and repeated with fervor the beloved "Shema," the simple creed of Judaism: "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah; and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might." And while the people still stood, the ruler of the synagogue with raised hands pronounced the three beautiful benedictions of the ritual upon the assembled faithful. Seated in a reverent silence, the people listened while one after another the elders rose and repeated the prayers of the liturgy, and at the end there came from the congregation a hearty "Amen."

Then came the high point of the service. Approaching the Ark, kneeling reverently before it a moment in prayer, the ruler pushed back the curtains and took out the roll of the Law, from which, moving to the reading desk, he read passage after passage in the sonorous Hebrew, while the people listened with bowed heads as the words of God to Moses fell on their ears. Replacing the roll in the Ark, the ruler now took out the roll of the Prophets, and with a courteous bow offered it to the guest of honor, as was the custom of the synagogue, for him to read from the sacred scripture and expound its meanings in a sermon.

With tense expectancy the congregation waited as Jesus unrolled the scroll to the book of the prophet Isaiah and in a voice full of music read the familiar words:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the
poor;
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Laying down the roll on the desk, Jesus began to speak, while his luminous eyes burned into their souls, in words full of music and poetry, recalling them to the deeper meanings of that prophecy of the Messiah, the coming one, whom they were all awaiting; pointing out that he was not to be a ruler and warrior and a conqueror of Israel's enemies, but a lover of men, healing their diseases and saving their souls. And their hearts were strangely stirred as they listened, with growing wonder at his eloquence. And murmurs were heard as they looked at one another. "Can this be Joseph's son? How can this carpenter whom we knew as a common man be suddenly endowed with such divine fire?"

Then, gently and quietly, while men's faces blanched with astonishment and their ears could scarce credit

what they heard, he told them of his own message of the Kingdom with its hope for the poor, of its acceptance by his many disciples, of his own healing of the blind and his release of the captives of pain from the prison house of disease, and ended with the simple but startling words, "Today, in *me*, then, this scripture is fulfilled in your own presence." Thunder-struck they gazed at one another and the murmurs were charged with anger and resentment. "What blasphemy is this? How can this fellow whom we knew only yesterday here in Nazareth as a carpenter make such claims? These cures which he claims he worked, did they not take place in that half-heathen city of Capernaum? If he were the Messiah he would only perform miracles here among us Nazarenes, Jews of the Jews. Away with him!"

The service broke up in confusion. Angry and determined, the men of the synagogue moved toward the platform to lay hands on this blasphemous upstart, this common carpenter who called himself the Christ. Calmly, with that strange power that ever awed the mobs, Jesus walked slowly down the aisle, while men cursed and glowered but dared lay no hand on him; and, followed by the jeering mob mouthings violence, he passed down the side street that ended at the brow of the hill on which Nazareth was built. Then, while his fellow townsmen raved and cursed, the white-robed figure walked slowly down the winding road into the plain below and disappeared, never to return again to the city of his youth. "He came unto his own and his own received him not." Truly prophetic were his words, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own city." For Nazareth rejected him, this one who came to offer himself as the Savior of mankind.

I.

That scene upon which we have looked is something more than a leaf out of the pages of history; it is of perennial significance. For men have rejected Jesus all through history, and men are doing it today.

You and I today, as we search the stern implications of this scene, may find in it a threefold prefiguring of our own rejection of Jesus. First of all we, like the men of Nazareth, reject Jesus because, like them, we assume ourselves to be thoroughly familiar with him. But the Jesus at whom we are looking is not the Jesus of the Gospels, but an image that we have made out of our own dominant ideas. For this Christian religion that we profess, this formal Christianity that we are taught, is a strange compound from many sources, an intermingling of many strains of thought and life. In it we recognize, if we are at all analytical, the heritage that we have received from Greek, Roman and Teuton. From the Greek we received that wondrous lambent flame of genius for criticism, that searching into truth that has built our whole scientific world, that penchant for abstract reasoning, that desire to gather up all the meanings of life in a philosophy which was the characteristic quality of the Greek mind and soul. From the Roman we received the power to create laws, build institutions, reach out after power and subject peoples to our wills; to build a mighty imperialism and make gold the sign and symbol of a civilization

builded upon it; to increase in wealth, in power, in strength, in the ability to rule. And from our Teutonic ancestors, from those Germanic tribes of the great forests of the north from whom most of us have derived our blood, we Nordic folk, as we call ourselves, have received our heritage of a fierce and passionate desire for war, a strength and tenacity of purpose, a certain ruthlessness and hardness, efficiency and practicality.

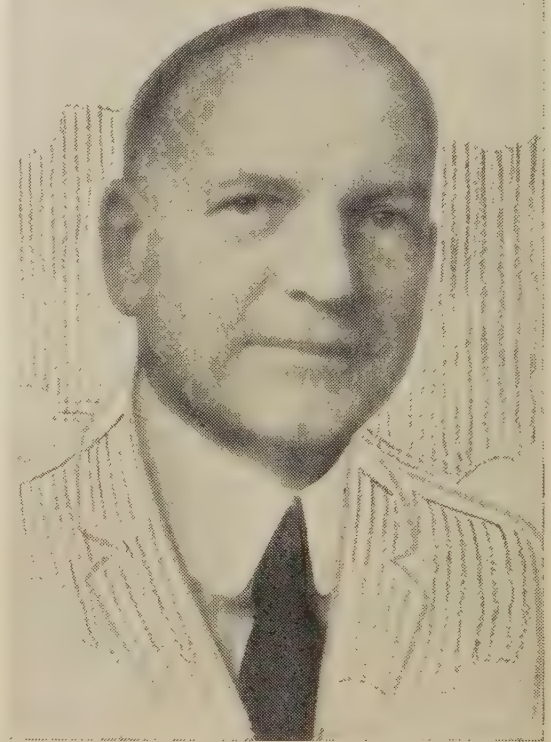
These heritages are all blended in our civilization, are superimposed upon the Christianity that was fully revealed only in the life of Jesus. And so we have taken this Jesus of the Gospels, this lover of men, this tender-hearted and compassionate healer of disease, this man who loved the poor and preached the gospel to them, this man whose one thought was to go about doing good, this man who was passionately devoted to a Kingdom that would be all-inclusive and gather unto itself all men, that should be built on justice and good will, this Jesus who gave himself utterly and set a cross in the midst of human history as the symbol of his religion—we have made this Jesus sanctify our greed, we have made him bless our battle flags and the ghastly holocaust of war; and we have thought we were thus honoring him. One has well said, "The strangest and most wonderful miracle of all history is the choice of Jesus by the Western world as its God." What is there in common between this Jesus of the Gospels and that crass materialism, that hard, grasping passion for money, that lust for power, that fierce, insatiable desire for fighting that are so integral a part of our modern world? No; like the men of Nazareth, we have thought we knew Jesus but we have not known him at all. For if there is anything that the Christian heart needs it is to go back again and sit down with the Gospels and know the actual Jesus, that Jesus whom his fellow countrymen and townsmen did not know, and whom even you and I who call ourselves by his name do not know. We have been rejecting him because we have put in his place in our minds and hearts a kind of simulacrum or image, in which we have interfused and blended, possibly unconsciously, the great dominant motives and passions of our Western world.

II.

And in the second place, we, like the men of Nazareth, have rejected Jesus because although we have felt the beauty and power of his life and teachings we have refused to accept his mastery, we have never taken him in earnest. "Ah, but," you say, "that is not true. Has not the Christian church through the ages honored him and loved him and followed him?" Yes, it has. "Has there not been infused into our life within the Christian home a spirit of love and service and beauty and holiness that other nations have never known and of which other nations have been ignorant?" Yes; all that is true. "Has there not been builded in our civilization, out of our love for our children and our wish for the next generation to be better than our own and have a larger knowledge and vision and wisdom, this great educational system of the modern

world in which there is so much of the spirit of Christ?" Again it is true; church and home and school have been partially converted to the spirit and ideals of Jesus; or, if you want to change the figure of speech, you may say that he has been ruling in large part in these realms of our life.

But when we enter the realms of business, industry, politics, statecraft, what place have we given to Jesus? How largely do his ideals dominate the business world, and how much of his passion for men and not things, his exaltation of personality above profit, has had a place in this industrial order, where our machines have run away with us and our materialism has gone mad? In the world of politics how much of Jesus' spirit is



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revealed at London and Paris and Washington? How much of the idealism of Christ is revealed in the Congress of the United States or in the Parliament of England? We ask these questions and we know the answer. We know he is not there. How much of a place has the simple, loving Jesus with his gospel of good will on earth—how much of a place has this Man of Peace found in the councils of nations founded on force, glorifying force, talking peace and building battleships, mouthing words about good will and looking at everybody with suspicion and hatred? The hypocrisy of our modern world is the most disgusting and disheartening thing that we confront. Far better for us to come out fairly and squarely and say: "All right, we are for war always. Force is the only possible way we will get anywhere. Let us build our America as an imperialistic power and reach out after markets and the conquest of the world"—than to be constantly talking these mealy-mouthed platitudes about peace

when we are always increasing our appropriations for war and spending ninety per cent of our income for it. Of all the hollow and horrible hypocrisies that, to me, is the worst. And that is something we will have to confront some day in all its implications and meanings and effects. Indeed, we are confronting it now.

What has Jesus had to do, how much of a place has he had, in our business, politics, statecraft, industry? He has been given no place at all. And when men who believed the religion of Jesus had something to do with these realms of life, have sought to bring the principles of his gospel into application there, they have been laughed at as fools and told: "You cannot build civilization that way; you cannot make a stable and abiding world on the principles of Jesus. Why try to practice good will, brotherhood, mutual respect, tolerance? You will never get anywhere. Civilization must be built on the survival of the fittest, the conquest of the weak by the strong, the outwitting of the ignorant by the shrewd—that is the way you must build it."

And that is the way we *have* built it, my friends, and it is falling round our ears today. All this talk about "depression" is nonsense; we have reached the collapse of the civilization we have built without caring anything about Jesus. More and more of us are seeing it and realizing that after all is said and done Jesus was not the archfool of history we have thought him when he told us that we could never build an enduring civilization and a stable world, and could never know peace and comfort even for our own personal lives, until we were willing to recognize the universal fatherhood of God and the respect that man must owe to man since all of us are sons and daughters of God.

III.

And in the third place, we have been rejecting Jesus because we have not listened to his universal gospel of salvation but have narrowed it down to ourselves. We have not been willing to follow the implications of that gospel that he preached when he told us of the universal fatherhood of an all-loving God, and that consequence and corollary of it, the universal brotherhood of man. How beautiful and eloquent have been our creations on this theme, and how little we have meant them! How very profuse our professions of this ideal and how little reality in them all! How many of us really believe this truth? Look out upon our world today, rent asunder by class divisions and distinctions based on wealth, property and place. Look at our world with its race hatreds, intense and fanatical. Look at our world whose nations are suspicious and hostile, building huge tariff walls and navies and armies against one another. Ask yourselves how much we have really believed this gospel that Jesus so plainly taught and lived. Do you honestly believe in your own heart of hearts that in the sight of God the Mexican, the Negro, the Chinese are just as good as we? Do you honestly believe that we are after all one blood under a Universal Father? My friends, one of the chief difficulties with our missions today is the subtle hypocrisy that has lurked in them—that superiority complex, to use the

psychological phrase of today, with which we have gone with the gospel to other peoples. We are not really superior. We are not carrying to "souls benighted" the "wisdom from on high." These folk across the sea with all their faults and defects are not to be looked down upon as inferiors.

Moreover, how many of us really believe today that in the sight of God our Father there is no distinction between nations, and that Germany, and Turkey, and Czechoslovakia, and Albania are just as good as America? Yet we have no real superiority about which to boast, and God knows, as we look into the life of our own nation today we ought to be exceedingly humble and reluctant to boast when we confront what we can plainly see of the defects of our own life. "Judge not that ye be not judged."

Are these words too harsh and stern? Am I drawing an exaggerated picture of what is about us? Am I making too harsh an application of the rejection at Nazareth? Remember I am preaching to myself as much as to you. We are all together in the same plight. Unconsciously, perhaps, we have, God help us, like the men of Nazareth, rejected Jesus.

When the time comes that we can take him in earnest and believe his teachings and try to live them, then we will begin really to accept him. Until that time we must confess that we have not been willing to accept this one that came unto Nazareth with those words of love to release men from the prison house of pain and sorrow and to save men's souls from the power of sin and preach the gospel of hope to the poor and despairing and bring on earth a Kingdom of God.

As we look back at that scene we see in it the foreshadowing of the continuous rejection of Jesus through the centuries. Pray God that in our own lives and in our inmost hearts we may confess that sin this morning, and come humbly and contritely to the throne of God and ask that we may be permitted to take him into our hearts as Master and Lord.

Washington

LONG are the years since he fell asleep
Where the Potomac flows gently by,
There where Mt. Vernon's green stretches sweep
Under the blue Virginia sky.
Warrior and statesman and patriot true,
Well had he wielded both sword and pen.
Truly, they said as they laid him to rest,
"First in the hearts of his countrymen."

Long are the years—and the land he loved
Stands among nations, grown strong and great;
True to his vision of long ago,
Proud of the hand that so shaped her fate.
Time but adds splendor to face so fair,
Years but test greatness—and now as then
Sleeps he in peace on Mt. Vernon's hill,
"First in the hearts of his countrymen."

B. Y. WILLIAMS.

What Shall I Do with My Life?

By HOWARD THURMAN

Matthew 4:1-11.

IN the first temptation Jesus was hungry. The fact could have doubtless been duplicated all over Palestine with this important exception—many of his fellows were hungry through no choice of their own. They were hungry because necessity had confronted their universe with an invincible gesture. By their fellows they had been shut off from free and necessitous participation in the basic creature demands for survival. On the other hand, Jesus was hungry because he had foregone these demands under the impelling power of a great concentration. He was caught in the agonizing grip of a great challenge: What shall I do with my life? What must be for me an adequate disposition of my life?

Wrestling in the wilderness seemed strangely trivial and irrelevant. The quest in its practical bearing was this: How fundamentally important is bread, is feeding the hungry? It is true that man cannot live by bread alone. He must have bread. But should this be his major concern? Only a hungry man could face this question realistically. The danger for a hungry man in such a reflection is that the importance of food may be greatly overemphasized, for it is very natural to idealize possessions which we are denied.

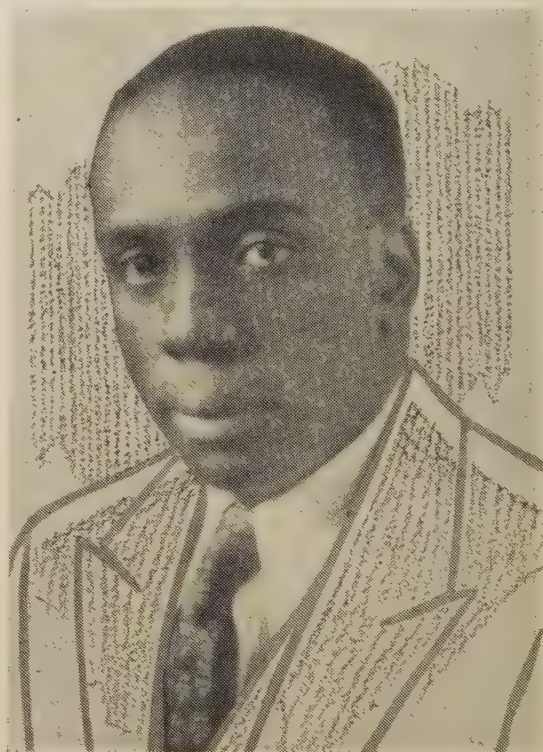
With reference to the problem before him Jesus reached an amazingly significant conclusion. Man must live on bread but not bread alone. There is more besides, and it is this that reveals the true stature of the man. Man must have food, yes. But admitting this, and seeing its practical significance in terms of actual survival, what then? He must let the bias of his life be on the side of those needs that cannot be adequately included in creature demands.

The problem for us is at once clear. I must not make the error of giving myself over to the meeting of these needs alone, but even as I recognize realistically the physical needs of men, I must let my bias be on the side of their deeper concerns; I must give priority to those of their desires and yearnings that can never be met by a full stomach or by all the economic security available in the world. The major emphasis must not be an either-or one but rather a both-and emphasis with a positive bias in favor of that which is deeper than food. My interests in creature needs must be genuine and practical, but I must see these needs as things which may stand clearly in the way of the realization of the higher ends of life. Feed the hungry? Yes, and always. But I must know that man is more than his physical body. There is something in him that calls for beauty and comradeship and righteousness. I love Jesus for the shaft of light that he throws across the pathway of those who seek to answer the question, What shall I do with my life?

In the second temptation Jesus is facing the problem of one of life's great illusions. The tempter sug-

gests to him that if he were to go to the pinnacle of the temple and cast himself down, he would not be hurt; in other words, the operation of what we call natural law would be interrupted in his behalf and God would perform a miracle on the spot. For, the tempter quietly whispers, the world of nature is not really orderly.

Jesus' reply was very striking. He said in substance, "If I go to the pinnacle of the temple and cast myself down I will break my neck. He who presumes to disregard the ordinary processes of nature tempts God." His choice here was on the side of the normal, natural working of the simple laws of life, demanding nothing of them that dared to stretch them out of shape. To do so would have been to deceive himself and to have



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created a spiritual problem for which no solution could have been found.

The bearing of this choice upon the lives of students is at once clear. I have had students who during an entire semester did not pay much attention to the simple, direct, natural operations of the classroom, who fulfilled none of the day-by-day requirements relative to their work. Then, when the day of judgment arrived, they came into the classroom, read the examination questions and expected, by some beyond-the-natural operation, to participate in complete knowledge and understanding of the questions raised. In other words, they expected a miracle. What they received was what they had rated—failure. It is a terrible truth that life does not have a habit of making exceptions in our case even though we may be good in general, even though our fathers may be great men and our reputations of outstanding merit. Let us not be deceived by the great illusions, but let us see the finger of God

moving in the natural unfolding of antecedents and consequences. I love Jesus for the shaft of light that he throws across the pathway of those who seek to answer the question, What shall I do with my life?

In the third temptation the tempter strikes at the center of Jesus' dominant passion, to bring society under the acknowledged judgment of God and thereby insure its purification. More and more as he lived, Jesus became the embodiment of this great desire. He thought of himself as the example of the judgment and of the salvation of God. The tempter said to him, "Behold the kingdoms of the world. You want them to become the Kingdom of God. But they belong to me." It seems to me that the full realization of the tempter's thought came to Jesus with tremendous shock. His reasoning may have been, "God created me; God created the world of nature; God created all mankind. Therefore, God is the creator of the relationships that exist between men." At this point the devil suggested, "You may be logical, but you are not true. I made the relationships between men." In the awareness of the far-reaching significance of this fact, Jesus subsequently cautioned his disciples, "Behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. You must be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves." And again he said, "Rejoice when men persecute you for my sake, for it means that you are making inroads on territory that is foreign to the will of God."

It seems to me that that experience reveals a potent half-truth; namely, that the world can be made good if all the men in the world as individuals become good men. After the souls of men are saved, the society in which they function will be a good society. This is only a half-truth. Many men have found that they are caught in a framework of relationships evil in design, and their very good deeds have developed into instrumentalities for evil. It is not enough to save the souls of men; the relationships that exist between men must be saved also.

To approach the problem from the other angle is to assume that once the relationships between men are

saved, the individual men will thereby become instruments of positive weal. This is also a half-truth. The two processes must go on apace or else men and their relationships will not be brought under conscious judgment of God. We must, therefore, even as we purify our hearts and live our individual lives under the divine scrutiny, so order the framework of our relationships that good men can function in it to the glory of God. I love Jesus for the shaft of light that he throws across the pathway of those who seek to answer the question, What shall I do with my life?

Give me the courage to live!
Really live—not merely exist.
Live dangerously,
Scorning risk!
Live honestly,
Daring the truth—
Particularly the truth of myself!
Live resiliently—
Ever changing, ever growing, ever adapting.
Enduring the pain of change
As though 'twere the travail of birth.
Give me the courage to live,
Give me the strength to be free
And endure the burden of freedom
And the loneliness of those without chains;
Let me not be trapped by success,
Nor by failure, nor pleasure, nor grief,
Nor malice, nor praise, nor remorse!
Give me the courage to go on!
Facing all that waits on the trail—
Going eagerly, joyously on,
And paying my way as I go,
Without anger or fear or regret
Taking what life gives,
Spending myself to the full,
Head high, spirit winged, like a god—
On . . . on . . . till the shadows draw close.
Then even when darkness shuts down,
And I go out alone, as I came,
Naked and blind as I came—
Even then, gracious God, hear my prayer:
Give me the courage to live!

A Pastoral Prayer

BY KING D. BEACH

LORD God our Heavenly Father, Father of our Elder Brother, Jesus the Christ, teach us to pray. Show us how to hold reverent conversation with Thee, to establish and maintain spiritual connections with Thee our God most high. Help us to put away distracting thoughts to concentrate for a moment on the knowledge that this communion is altogether holy and sacred. Make us conscious of our unworthiness but also aware of Thy holy love and infinite desire to impart the knowledge of heaven to the children of earth. As we enter into the haven of Thy presence, may we shed the sordid badges of sin and self-will that mark us as aliens, and may we by reason of high and holy purpose, and Thy boundless grace, feel at home and at ease in Thy company.

Father, we pray that Thy Kingdom may come in the political and social interests of our national life. Where ignorance or indifference has denied us the knowledge to choose leaders of Thy choice, guide our hands as we mark our ballots; and as we resume the task of making a better tomorrow, may we be influenced by this hour which we have lived with Thee. Stir in us, Father, a holy distress at the shoddy evidence of our belief in Thee until we shall turn in humility and hope to find our peace and satisfaction in Thy will.

Stimulate our memories and sharpen our intellects that we may see the wisdom, and enjoy the blessing of giving Thee all the praise, and all the honor, and all the glory, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

The Sermon as an Art Form

By CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER

SERMONIZING belongs to the fine arts and has forms of its own as distinctive as the other arts which are used to clothe the basic pattern of the service. If art is the imposition of significant form upon the world, then sermonizing is art of the highest order. It seeks to crystallize into patterns of clarity, vitality and beauty the basic experiences of the religious life; the insights given to man concerning the meaning of God and the universe, the understanding of men regarding the imperative will of God, the fundamental patterns of individual and corporate conduct within the Kingdom of God. It reduces the stream of experience to order; arranges it; classifies it; and then in patterns of its own creation, sermonizing seeks to make these results intelligible and vital to man.

Speaking of plastic art, Rodin says: "Art is contemplation. It is the pleasure of the mind which reaches into nature and which there discovers the spirit by which nature herself is animated. It is the joy of the intellect which sees clearly into the universe and which recreates it with conscientious vision. Art is the most sublime mission of man, since it is the expression of thought seeking to understand the world and to make it understood."

• What Is the Sermon?

If the preacher is an artist every one of those words will be important to him, for he will recognize them as an adequate and precise description of the sermon. The sermon, too, is contemplation, the pleasure of the mind searching into nature to discover the God by which nature is animated. The sermon, too, is the joy of the intellect which recreates that vision in patterns of understanding. The sermon, too, is the most sublime mission of man, since it is the expression of thought seeking to understand God and the world and to make the universe understood.

To despise the idea of the sermon as art of this high order, is to miss the whole point of sermonizing. Occasionally, one is subjected to the opinion of a rough-and-ready preacher that, for his part, he has nothing to do with homiletics; that his mission is to "preach Jesus Christ and him crucified," and that without formal preparation he stands ready as the instrument of the Holy Spirit. Of course, one has only to listen to this man's preaching, to realize that what he has said is all too true. His sermons

are without form or homiletic care, a shapeless gruel, peppered with personal anecdotes and the sacrilegious use of the Lord's precious name. If the sculptor uses the most meticulous care in shaping his clay and chipping his marble, bringing to his task the joy of his whole intellect, how joyfully and carefully the preacher ought to approach his art which is on such an infinitely higher index than sculpture.

• The Sermon and Life Experience

In his book, *The World, the Arts and the Artist*, Professor Edman writes lucidly and interestingly con-



CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER

cerning the nature of art. Though he writes of the general field of art every word he says is pertinent to the sermon. Consider such sentences as these: "One of the characteristic features of the arts is to teach its connoisseurs continually to see the world and experience in new and hitherto undreamed of patterns." That has a definite relationship to the preaching of the individual Christian life and the Kingdom of God upon the earth. "Wherever materials are given form, wherever movement has direction, wherever life has, as it were, line and composition, there we have intelligence and there we have that transformation of a given chaos into a desired and desirable order that we call art. Experience, apart from art and intelligence, is wild and orderless. It is formless matter, aimless movement." That is an adequate explanation of the need for and the basic process of sermonizing, and relates directly to the other arts.

Let me quote from Professor Edman once more: the arts "may—in major instances they do—clarify, intensify and interpret life." Again, this suggests the basic process of sermonizing, which is always the classification and interpretation of the fundamental issues of life and the permeation of those issues with the proper emotions. A twofold purpose is revealed by these words. One aspect of the sermon is concerned with intellectual content, the idea, the insight, the will of God and the pattern of human life. The other aspect of the sermon seeks to flood and undergird the idea and the insight with significant and directed emotion.

A sermon is never purely intellectual. It is illuminated by the mind, but it is always rooted in the emotions. It was emotion which first prompted the mind of the preacher to strike out into the unknown, with a certain lyric aspiration toward God. It is emotion that prompts him to preach and it is emotion which finally compels the attention of his congregation.

• Objectives of the Sermon

In the light of the foregoing discussion, we are now ready to state the objectives of the sermon:

- A. To clarify and interpret the will of God.
 1. To inform about the activity of God in history and in the present situation.
 2. To express the ideals, hopes, practices, faith and beliefs of Christianity.
 3. To suggest the rich possibilities of life in light of the Christian faith.
 4. To point out mistaken ways of living in the light of God's will.
 5. To correct mistaken beliefs and opinions.
 6. To clarify the confused ideas which people have regarding the will of God and the nature of the Christian faith.
 - B. To intensify this material by undergirding it with emotion:
 1. To secure a favorable attitude.
 2. To stimulate a feeling of sin, anger, regret.
 3. To stimulate a feeling of joy, confidence, peace, expectancy.
 4. To secure action, individual or group.
 5. To stimulate the desire to understand and remember.
 6. To secure a change of belief.
- Needless to say, every sermon will

not fulfill all of these objectives. They are comprehensive and cover the whole range of sermonizing. They constitute the preacher's total art. In each individual sermon, the preacher will select one or more of these objectives and then seek an appropriate sermonic pattern through which the objective can be accomplished. The pattern and style of the sermon will vary according to the purpose and the congregation. A hostile congregation requires a different approach from a friendly one. Likewise a sermon seeking to reveal the activity of God in the life of a man will require a different approach from a sermon stating the Christian theology. Here is the secret, not only of variety in preaching, but also of effectiveness in preaching. Style and pattern must be changed with purpose and content. The preacher must function as artist in determining the relationship between the two.

• Seven Types of Sermons

An analysis of numbers of sermons reveals the following fundamental types, each one having its own specific patterns of expression:

1. The exposition; the purpose of which is to convey information, to explain, interpret and clarify.
2. The exposition with a deep emotional basis; the purpose of which is to interpret life and to flood life with an emotional glow.
3. The inspirational sermon, in which the theme is epitomized into a trenchant phrase or symbol which the people will long remember.
4. The exposition seeking to change opinion and to secure a favorable attitude.
5. The biographical sermon; the purpose of which is to reveal the motivating forces in the life of a person.
6. The book sermon; the purpose of which is to analyze a book and to portray its value for the religious life.
7. The lecture recital, the purpose of which is to reveal the many facets of some aspect of God's will.

Each of these sermonic types has its own distinctive design. The inspirational sermon will not have the same pattern that the lecture recital has: for, just as in poetry, we have the various forms of sonnet, ode, lyric, epic and hymn with their own distinctive forms; so, in sermonizing, we have at least these seven different types. Each one has many possibilities of development within itself. It has amused me to outline the possibilities of development for all seven. Each one has an introduction, body and conclusion, but allows for great va-

riety of development without going beyond its particular form.

• Exposition and Emotional Stimulus

Since there is not space in this short article to state the forms of all these types, let me suggest the possibilities of the exposition with an emotional stimulus.

The exposition with an emotional stimulus, the purpose of which is to interpret life and to flood life with an emotional glow.

I. Introduction.

1. A text.
 - a. A statement of its context.
 - b. A statement of its use in the sermon.
 - c. A statement of the purpose of the sermon.
2. A poem, picture or passage of prose.
 - a. A statement of its meaning.
 - b. A statement of its relation to the purpose of the sermon.
3. A story, parable or play.
 - a. A statement of its meaning for the sermon.
 - b. A statement of the purpose of the sermon.
4. An incident, event, situation or mental state.
 - a. A statement of the resultant need for a discussion of the topic.
 - b. A statement of the purpose and plan of development.
5. An antithesis of the point of view to be discussed.
 - a. Relation of the antithesis to the present situation.
 - b. A statement of the need of the topics being discussed.
6. The statement of a need.
 - a. Statement of the topic and purpose of the statement of a text.
 - b. Statement of the plan of development.
7. Statement of a question.
 - a. An answer to the question in the proposition.
 - b. Statement of plan of development.

II. Body.

1. Division of the topic into major propositions.
2. Narration of events or situations with their meaning portrayed.
3. A consideration of past, present and future conditions.
4. Antithetical and imaginative considerations.
5. Development of the introductory story or situation more fully.

In the body of this sermon there must be ample use of: reason, analogy, illustration, concrete and particular material, imaginative and response-provoking material, description, climax and human interest material.

III. Conclusion.

1. A summary and statement of the importance of the discussion.
2. Close at the conclusion of the last major proposition brought to a climax.
3. Close with a poem, hymn, picture, story or event.
4. Close with the text.
5. A suggestion of future possibilities.
6. The meaning and importance of the discussion stated in a climax or exhortation.

(This article is one section of a chapter of a book which the author is preparing for early publication—Ed.)

United Church Number

The October number of The Christian Century Pulpit will feature sermons by ministers of the United Church of Canada. The sermons have been selected by Rev. Ernest Marshall Howse, pastor of the Westminster Church of Winnipeg, who contributes the Preacher Problem article. There will be sermons by

Rev. James S. Thomson, President, the University of Saskatchewan.

Rev. James W. Clarke, Knox United Church, Winnipeg, Man.

Rev. E. Crossley Hunter, First United Church, Hamilton, Ont.

Rev. Stanley Russell, Deer Park Church, Toronto, Ont.

Rev. T. W. Jones, Calvary United Church, Westmount, Que.

Rev. A. Lloyd Smith, Dominion-Douglas United Church, Westmount, Que.

Rev. F. H. McIntosh, First United Church, Campbelltown, N. B.

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• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

REV. FRANK FITT is pastor of the Grosse Point Memorial Church, Grosse Point Farms, Michigan. Before accepting this charge he was for twelve years the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Highland Park, Illinois. A graduate of Williams College, Mr. Fitt received his theological degree from Union Seminary. He pursued graduate studies both at Union and Columbia.

Rev. L. WENDELL FIFIELD is a graduate of Oberlin College and the Chicago Theological Seminary. He taught the Bible and Public Speaking at Yankton College for two years; then accepted a call to the First Congregational Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where he remained for thirteen years. Since 1929 he has been pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church, Seattle, Washington. He is the author of *How to Use the Bible*.

For more than a decade Rev. WILLIAM P. LEMON was pastor of the Presbyterian Church on the campus of the University of Minnesota; then for several years he ministered at First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City, another university town. He now ministers at the First Presbyterian Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and is also director of student work for the University of Michigan Presbyterian Corporation.

Educated at Furman University, Vanderbilt, and Duke, Rev. TALMAGE C. JOHNSON has been, since 1932, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Kinston, North Carolina. Before that he was a teacher in leading southern preparatory schools and colleges. He is the author of *The Christian Differential* and is a frequent contributor to various religious periodicals.

Rev. JOHN W. SHACKFORD is the Pre-

siding Elder of the Rock Hill District of the Upper South Carolina Methodist Conference. Educated at Randolph-Macon College and Vanderbilt University, he has occupied pastorates in Lynchburg, Norfolk and Richmond, Virginia, and in North and South Carolina. In 1915 he was elected head of the department of leadership training of the General Sunday School Board of the Methodist Church, and in 1922 was elected general secretary of the board. He is the author of *The Program of the Christian Religion* and *Education in the Christian Religion*.

Minister of the First Congregational Church, Long Beach, California, since 1909, Rev. HENRY KENDALL BOOTH has long been a leader in social Christianity on the Pacific coast, and in recent years has taken a prominent part in the campaign for international peace. Among his books are *The Great Galilean Returns*, *The Background of the Bible* and *The Bridge Between the Testaments*.

Dr. HOWARD THURMAN is a graduate of Morehouse College and also studied at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School. At the present time he is dean of the chapel, Howard University, Washington, D. C.

Rev. CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER is a graduate of Northwestern University and Garrett Biblical Institute of Evanston, Illinois. For eight years he served as pastor of the Methodist Church, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. For the past two years he has ministered to the Methodist Church, Ripon, Wisconsin.

Rev. KING D. BEACH is pastor of the Methodist Church, Tacoma, Washington.

TITLES AND TEXTS What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

A. F. BINNINGTON, Caledon East, Ont. "Spiritual Farming." Hosea 10:12—"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you."

ALFRED W. SWAN, First Congregational, Madison, Wis. "The Glorious Company." Rev. 7:9, 10—"Behold, a great multitude out of every nation . . . standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands, and they cry with a

great voice, saying: Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb."

JAMES BINGHAM, West Willow United Brethren, Lancaster, Pa. "Factors in a Great Life." Luke 12:15—"A man's life consists not in the abundance of things he possesses."

HUBERT DODD, Methodist, Hogansville, Ga. "Life's Gardens." Gen. 2:8—"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden." Matt. 26:36—"Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane." I Cor. 3:9—"Ye are God's field to be planted." (Moffatt)

JAMES R. BULLOCK, First Presbyterian, Gladewater, Tex. "Blank Pages or Living Epistles?" II Cor. 3:2—"Ye are our epistle . . . known and read of all men."

HOWARD CONN, Union Memorial, Glenbrook, Conn. "The Vision That Compels." Jer. 20:9—"Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

HARRY L. SLICK, Methodist, Dishman, Wash. "This Age of Hope." Rev. 21:1a—"And I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

Title of Sermon

Text used (write out the text)

Name of minister

Name of church

Address

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

AS I write, the world is standing with racked nerves on the edge of the precipice of war. This morning's paper tells of the non-aggression pact which has been agreed to by Russia and Germany. Its implications have not been interpreted as yet, but it seems to me that it spells a complete upset of the balanced power of empires upon which both **Is It** the fear of war and the hope of peace have **Chaos?** hitherto been staked. Certainly it means that Russia would at least be neutral in a war over Danzig and Poland. Does it mean that in exchange for this neutrality Russia is to receive, in addition to much else, a large slice of a dismembered Poland? Does it mean the dissolution of Russia's treaty with France? Does it mean the dissolution of the anti-comintern pact, and the isolation of Japan? With Germany's army strung along the two hundred miles of Slovakia's boundary line contiguous to Poland, as well as along her own boundary, and in military, though not yet political, possession of Danzig, will Poland actually resist the German threat? If Poland resists, will Britain and France keep their pledges under the changed situation and come to her back? If there is no war just now, will the new situation enable Italy to get what he wants from France? No man knows the outcome of the terrific war of nerves which is now being waged. Bit by bit, however, the world of the Versailles treaty is breaking down. The tragedy is that the world of Versailles is being broken down by the same kind of forces as those which set it up, and that such forces offer not the slightest hope of a better one. Before you preach another sermon on the international situation, I suggest that you read in Luccock's *Acts of the Apostles*, Volume II, what he has to say on pages 10 and 11.

The Book of the Month

THE RELIGION OF A HEALTHY MIND, by Charles T. Holman. Round Table Press, \$2.00.

IT is always with some scepticism that I open a new book purporting to deal with Christian things in terms of psychology. The psychology of religion has, in my opinion, done much harm to Christian faith. Its tendency has been to take subjective Christian experience as the total reality. The logical and inevitable result of such a procedure is humanism. But of course Christianity does have its subjective side. Its objective reality has got to be experienced if it is to function in human life. The point at issue is whether experience carries the initiative factor to which the objective reality is a response, or whether the initiative is in the objective reality and that human experience is the response to it. There can be no doubt, I think, that Christianity takes the latter position. Professor Holman seems to me to carry on his psychological interest under the sense

that psychology cannot tell the whole story—this in spite of the fact that he occasionally frames a sentence according to the pattern in vogue among the psychologists of religion. His analysis of religious experience does not leave you in a kind of squirrel's cage of subjectivity, but sets you free in a world ruled by a living God. This is what I take him to mean by healthy-mindedness. The book is rich with illustrations drawn from the author's own ripe experience as a teacher of ministers. His own mind is a "healthy" one, abjuring subtleties and obscurantisms. His thought is forthright and sound. As an interpretation of the Christian life (I wish he would use "Christian" more and "religious" less) this is the most wholesome and helpful book that has fallen into my hands, dealing with matters on which ministers are too easily misled by those who would make "psychiatrists" of them.

A Thought for the Month

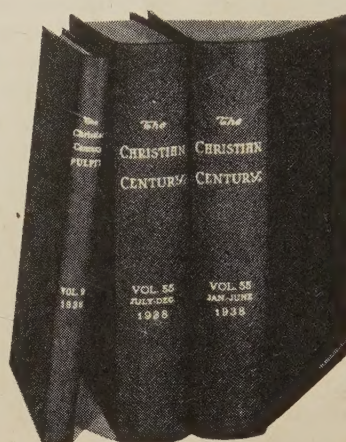
THE act of preaching requires to be continually vitalized with fresh imagination. Many of us take our preaching too casually. The sermon easily falls into a routine act. This is spiritual as well as professional suicide. Certainly the sermon is no routine or casual matter on the part of those who, coming to worship, stay to hear the preacher's words.

The Sermon as An Event It would be a good thing if every preacher in the quiet of his study would make a diagram of the position in which he will stand next Sunday morning when he rises to preach. Let him adopt the simple technique of the cartoonist and draw dotted lines running from himself to each individual in his congregation. Or if he cannot get so many lines in one diagram, let him select a score or a hundred from his probable congregation, at random, and draw the dotted lines from himself to them. Then let him reflect that these lines run not alone from him to his hearers, but from them to him. Along these lines there run the hopes and needs and expectations of living people who are frustrated, tempted, bereaved, anxious, disappointed, trying to make the best of circumstance. All these lines are focused where he, the preacher, stands. They are lines of communion between him and that many human souls. He will open the Bible and send its words of light and healing and hope down these lines to their hearts. He will open the door into the Holy Presence not so much to pray for them as to make articulate for them their own prayers which meet in him. Then he will open his mouth to preach! Has he something worth saying, something worthy of their expectation? Is it important—this thing he is going to say? Important, not merely to him, but to them? Here is no casual, routine exercise, but an event, a high event, pregnant with the possibility of salvation.

Charles Bayle Holman

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